



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

December 17, 2002

THE DIRECTOR

The Honorable John Conyers  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Conyers:

Thank you for your letter to the President of September 27, 2002, requesting a refugee admissions ceiling of 100,000 for fiscal years 2003 and 2004, as well as adequate funding in the Migration and Refugee Assistance account to support this ceiling. The President has asked that I respond on his behalf.

The Administration is committed to maintaining America's leadership role in international refugee policy and, in particular, refugee resettlement. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> affected the refugee admissions program, making it difficult to approach FY 2003 with significantly higher numbers as a goal. The challenge is to implement necessary security requirements and restore integrity to the admissions program. We must also remain mindful that there are substantial unmet needs around the world in the provision of life-sustaining humanitarian assistance to refugees.

As you know, in the *Proposed Refugee Admissions for Fiscal Year 2003: Report to the Congress*, released in September 2002, the Administration proposed a ceiling of 70,000 for FY 2003, cognizant of the fact that the current projected number of admissions - based on identified caseload - is 50,000. The Administration also proposed to carry over approximately \$15 million of unobligated FY 2002 funds into the next fiscal year to support efforts to strengthen the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resettlement capacity, develop caseload, and fund ongoing processing and security upgrades. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, after consultations with Congress, the President made the determination that 70,000 would be an appropriate FY 2003 refugee admissions ceiling. The Migration and Refugee Assistance account has sufficient funding available to support this ceiling, as well as to support efforts to strengthen the U.S. refugee admissions program for the future.

The Administration will take careful note of your interest in the refugee admissions program. Thank you again for your interest and for taking the time to communicate your views.